



81

DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN



Capullo
99
\$:
McFARLANE
70

TODD MCFARLANE AND IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS...

DEVIL INSIDE



PLOT

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Brian Holguin

STORY

Brian Holguin

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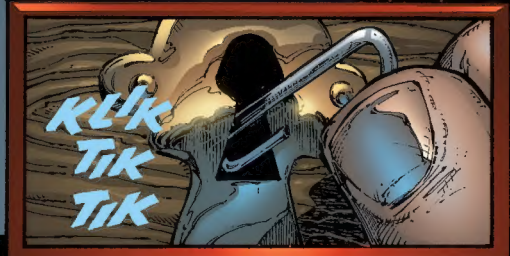
SPAWN 80 Summary

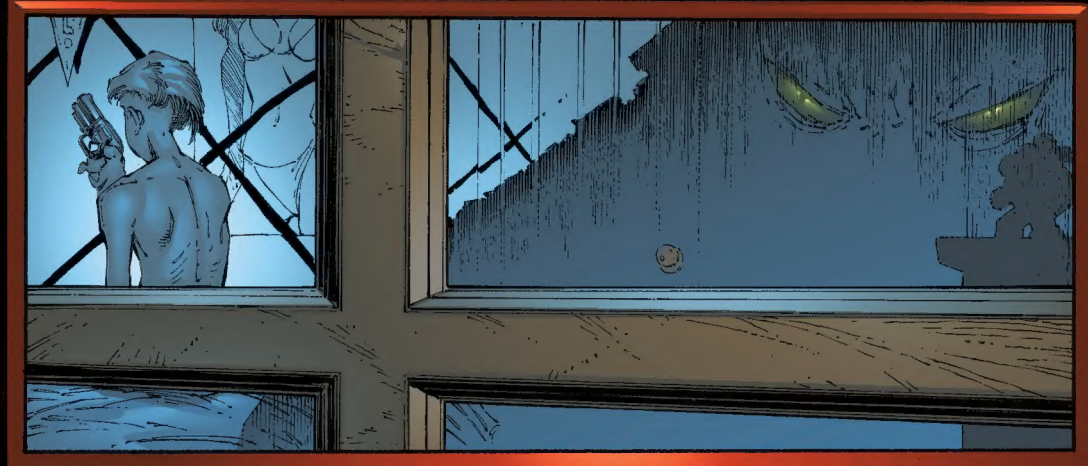
With Spawn's help, Sam and Twitch surmise that Dr. Sarah Frost is the serial killer of the alley inhabitants. Spawn confronts her and witnesses her suicide by pesticides, a victim of her own imagined phobia. But when Sam examines Dr. Frost's body, he finds that now familiar symbol branded on her neck... Later, Sam and Twitch receive a cardboard box with a head in it and a cryptic message written on their office wall.

DEDICATED TO

Mark McGwire

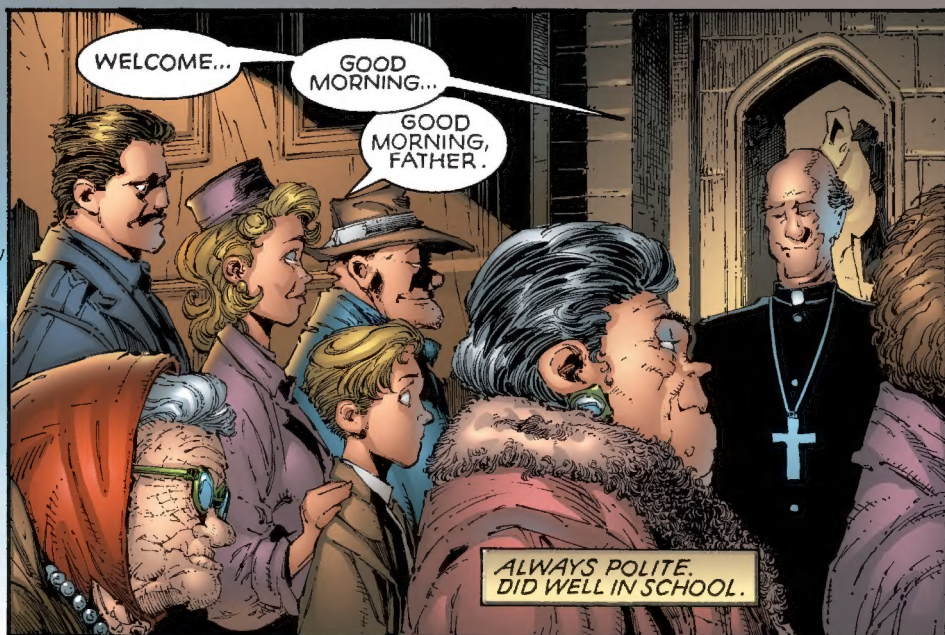
MERRICK,
LONG ISLAND.





WHEN IT'S
ALL OVER,
EVERYONE
WILL AGREE.

MARK LUCAS
WAS A
GOOD KID.

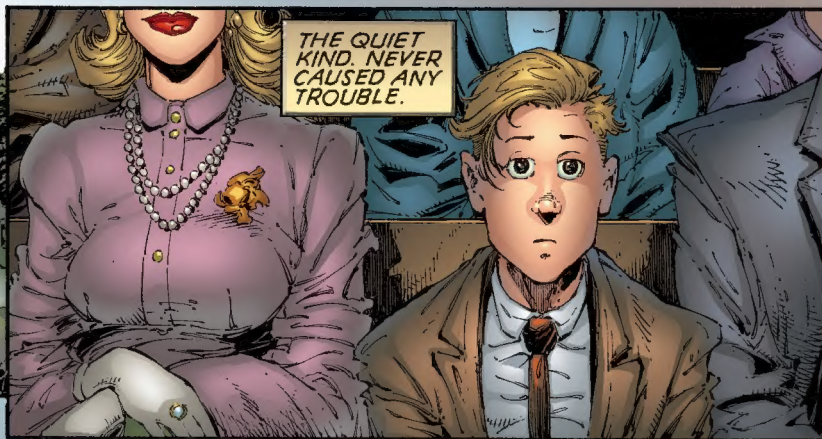


WELCOME...

GOOD
MORNING...

GOOD
MORNING,
FATHER.

ALWAYS POLITE.
DID WELL IN SCHOOL.



THE QUIET
KIND. NEVER
CAUSED ANY
TROUBLE.

NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO
UNDERSTAND WHY ONE
CLEAR WINTER MORNING,
HE JUST SEEMED TO SNAP.



MARK SEES THE
PRIEST SPEAKING,
BUT DOESN'T
HEAR HIM. JUST
A HOLLOW, RUSH-
ING SOUND IN HIS
EARS, THEN A
LOW BUZZING.

HE FEELS ELECTRIC, A
HOT WIRE BURNING
BENEATH HIS STERNUM.

HE FEELS ALIVE.

JUST A LITTLE
PRESSURE
NOW...




THE BUZZING SOUND GIVES WAY TO DISTANT THUNDER AND THE FALLING ECHOES OF SCREAMS ALL AROUND HIM.

AND THEN THE SCREAMS GIVE WAY TO LAUGHTER.


A THICK, GLUTTONOUS LAUGHTER ONLY MARK CAN HEAR.






MANHATTAN.

SPAWN
SLUMBERS.

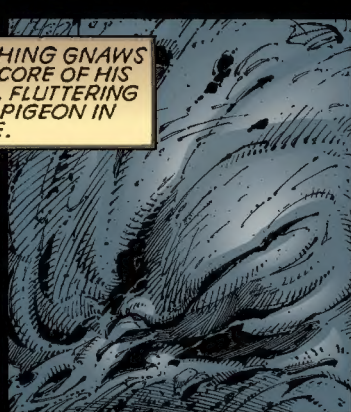


A BRIEF
RESPITE
FROM THE
TORTURES
OF HIS
EXISTENCE.

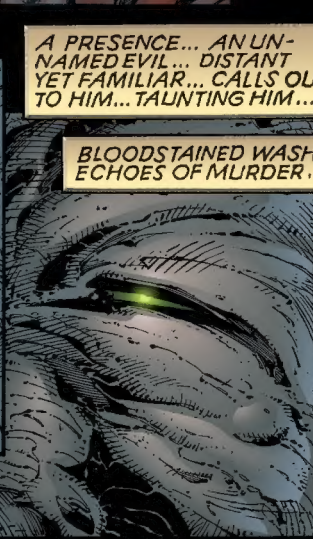


SOMETIMES, WHEN HE
DREAMS, HE ALMOST
FEELS LIKE A MAN AGAIN.


BUT RIGHT NOW,
HIS DREAMS ARE
TROUBLED.



SOMETHING GNAWS
AT THE CORE OF HIS
BEING... FLUTTERING
LIKE A PIGEON IN
A CAGE.



A PRESENCE... AN UN-
NAMED EVIL... DISTANT
YET FAMILIAR... CALLS OUT
TO HIM... TAUNTING HIM...



BLOODSTAINED WASHES AND
ECHOES OF MURDER...

MURDER
MOST FOUL...

SHAKEN BY THESE IMAGES,
SPAWN MOVES ON INSTINCT...

INSTINCT HONED
BY A LIFETIME
OF COMBAT AND
TEMPERED IN THE
FIRES OF HELL.

BOUNDING UP DECREPID
STAIRWAYS...
BARRELING
THROUGH
DECAYING
FLOOR
BOARDS...

FROM THE SHADOWS,
HE STARES OUT
ACROSS THE SKY-
LINE, AND SEES
NOTHING. BUT IT'S
OUT THERE...
SOMETHING IS
OUT THERE...

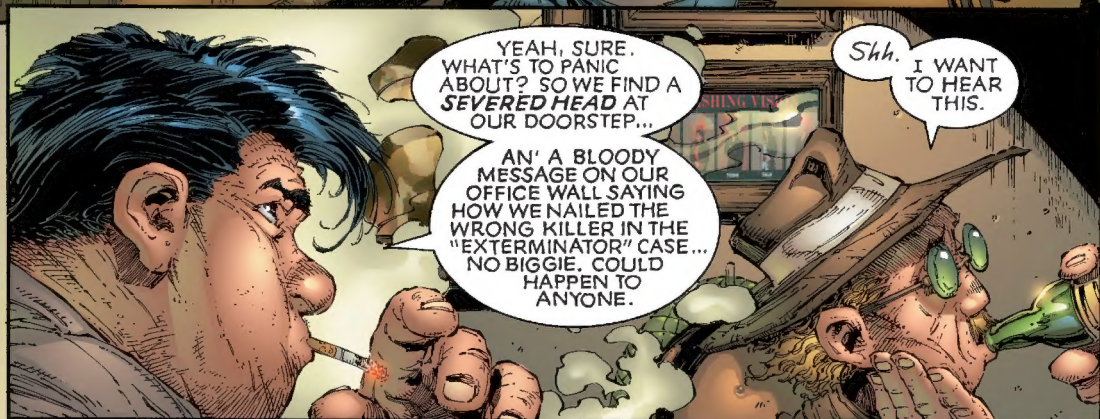
WHERE
IS IT?

AND IT'S
LAUGHING
AT HIM.



WE'RE
SCREWED,
PAL.

LET'S
NOT
PANIC
JUST
YET,
SIR.



YEAH, SURE.
WHAT'S TO PANIC
ABOUT? SO WE FIND A
SEVERED HEAD AT
OUR DOORSTEP...

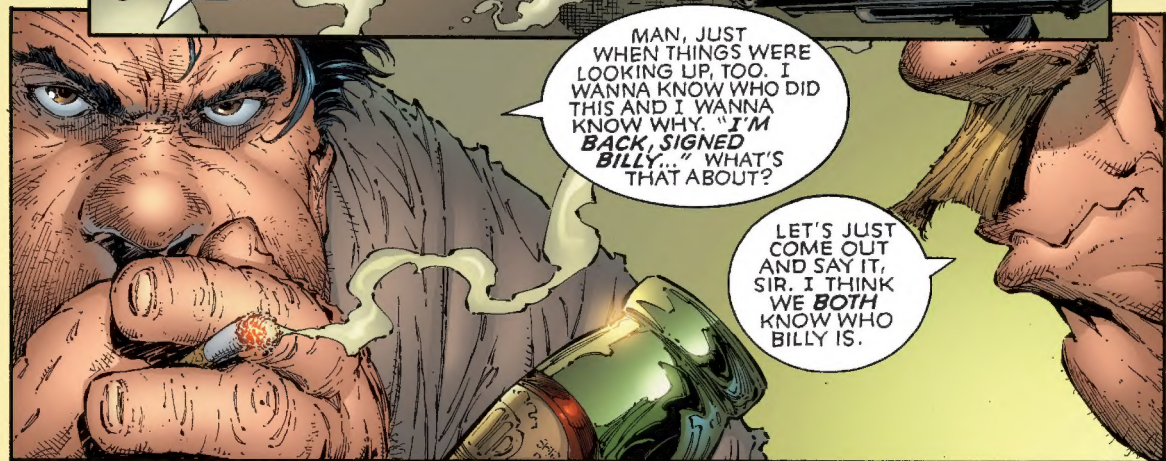
Shh. I WANT
TO HEAR
THIS.

AN' A BLOODY
MESSAGE ON OUR
OFFICE WALL SAYING
HOW WE NAILED THE
WRONG KILLER IN THE
"EXTERMINATOR" CASE...
NO BIGGIE. COULD
HAPPEN TO
ANYONE.



...BRUTAL, SENSE-
LESS SLAYINGS AT A
LONG ISLAND CHURCH
THIS MORNING.
AUTHORITIES REPORT
THE YOUTH IS STILL
AT LARGE...

AND THE
HITS KEEPON
COMING.



MAN, JUST
WHEN THINGS WERE
LOOKING UP, TOO. I
WANNA KNOW WHO DID
THIS AND I WANNA
KNOW WHY. "I'M
BACK, SIGNED
BILLY..." WHAT'S
THAT ABOUT?

LET'S JUST
COME OUT
AND SAY IT,
SIR. I THINK
WE **BOTH**
KNOW WHO
BILLY IS.



"WHO? BILLY KINCAID? EVERYONE'S FAVORITE CHILD-MOLESTING SERIAL KILLER? TORTURED THEM KIDS THEN GOT LET OUT ON A TECHNICALITY?"

"THERE'S JUST ONE LITTLE SNAG IN THAT THEORY, TWITCH. KINCAID IS *DEAD*."

"SEE, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT'VE REMEMBERED THAT, CONSIDERING HOW IT WAS *OUR* OFFICE HE WAS FOUND IN."*

"THERE'S NO NEED TO BE FLIPPANT, SIR."

"AS I RECALL, *SPAWN* LEFT HIM DANGLING THERE LIKE A PRIZE MARLIN, AN ICE CREAM SCOOPER STICKIN' OUTTA HIS PANCREAS."

"I ALSO RECALL LOSING OUR *BADGES* ABOUT TWO MINUTES LATER. ANY OF THIS RING A BELL?"

"OF COURSE I REMEMBER. BUT IF SIMMONS CAN RETURN FROM THE DEAD, WHY NOT KINCAID?"

"TWITCH, I THINK THAT BULLET IN YOUR HEAD IS TURNING YOUR BRAIN SEPTIC."

BOYS SCREAMED
GIRLS SCREAMED
SO I MADE HIM
SCREAM AND
SCREAM AND SCREAM

"TELL ME HONESTLY THAT THE SAME THOUGHT DIDN'T OCCUR TO YOU, SIR."

*WAY BACK IN *SPAWN* #5.



LONG
ISLAND.

MARK LUCAS
HIDES IN DARK-
NESS, EYES SHUT
DRUM-TIGHT,
PRAYING TO THE
VERY DEPTHS OF
HIS SOUL THAT IT
WAS ALL JUST A
BAD DREAM.

HE BARGAINS AND
PLEADS AND SWEARS
TO DEVOTE HIS LIFE
TO GOOD DEEDS, IF
ONLY IT WOULD ALL
JUST GO AWAY.

IT
DOESN'T
WORK.

Psst...
HEY, MARK,
IT'S ME. I
BROUGHT
YOU A SAND-
WICH.

HE TRIES NOT
TO THINK
ABOUT HIS
MOM AND
DAD, ABOUT
FATHER
COLLINS, OR
ABOUT ANY
OF THE REST.

THANKS,
MAN, BUT I
DON'T THINK
I CAN
EAT...

YOU'RE
ALL OVER THE
TV, DUDE. THIS
IS REALLY HARD-
CORE. THE COPS
CAME BY. I TOLD
'EM I HADN'T
SEEN YOU.

I THINK
I'M LOSING
MY MIND.
WHEN I
CLOSE MY
EYES...
I DON'T
KNOW...

HE TRIES NOT TO
THINK OF ANY-
THING AT ALL.

WOW. Uhm,
LISTEN. IT'S
DARK OUT NOW.
MAYBE YOU
SHOULD, WELL,
YOU KNOW...

YEAH.
OKAY.

MANHATTAN.

Mmm...
A RATHER
PEPPERY
SAUVIGNON.

PIQUANT
YET
BUOYANT.
GOOD FINISH.
PAINTS THE
THROAT
NICELY.

NOT
ENTIRELY
UNLIKE
FRESHLY
SPILT
BLOOD.

OK,
ETHAN,
YOU'RE
AWFUL.

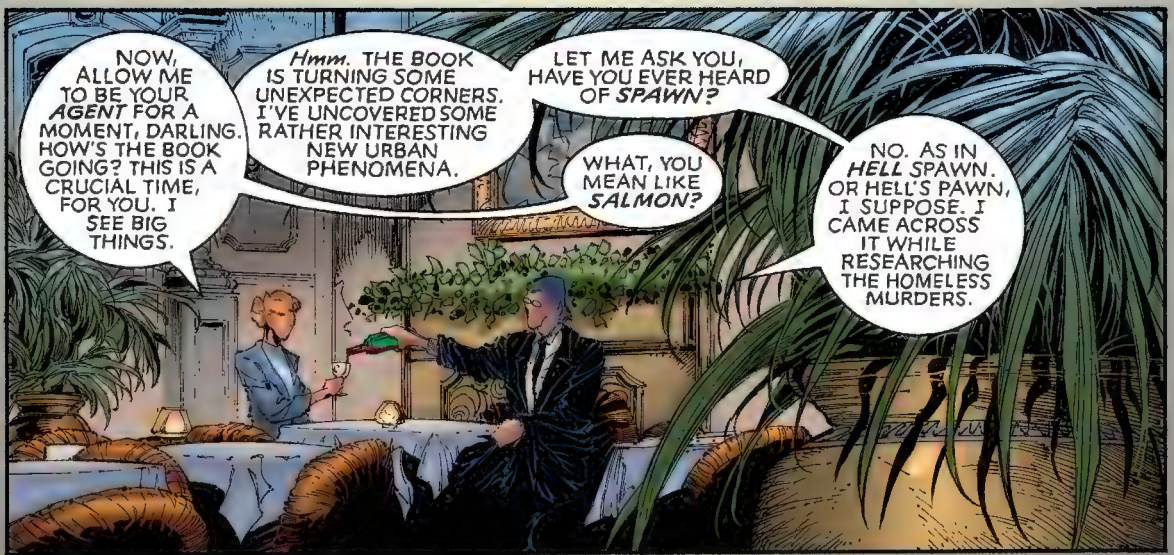
I HAVE A
REPUTATION
TO MAINTAIN.

OH,
SPEAKING OF
"AWFUL," DID YOU
HEAR ABOUT THAT
SHOOTING OUT ON
LONG ISLAND? I
HAVE A COUSIN
WHO LIVES
RIGHT NEAR
THERE. KIDS
TODAY.

OK YES... ANOTHER TEEN-
AGE SUBURBAN MALCONTENT
GOES GUN CRAZY. WHY CAN'T THEY
JUST GET BAD HAIRCUTS AND
READ NEITCHZE?

THE WORST
PART IS THAT IT'S ALL
GETTING SO **PREDICT-
ABLE**. I EXPECT THE
BOY SCOUTS WILL START
GIVING OUT MERIT
BADGES IN **SPREE**
KILLING SOON.

tsk-tsk.
AWFUL.
YOU'RE JUST
AWFUL.



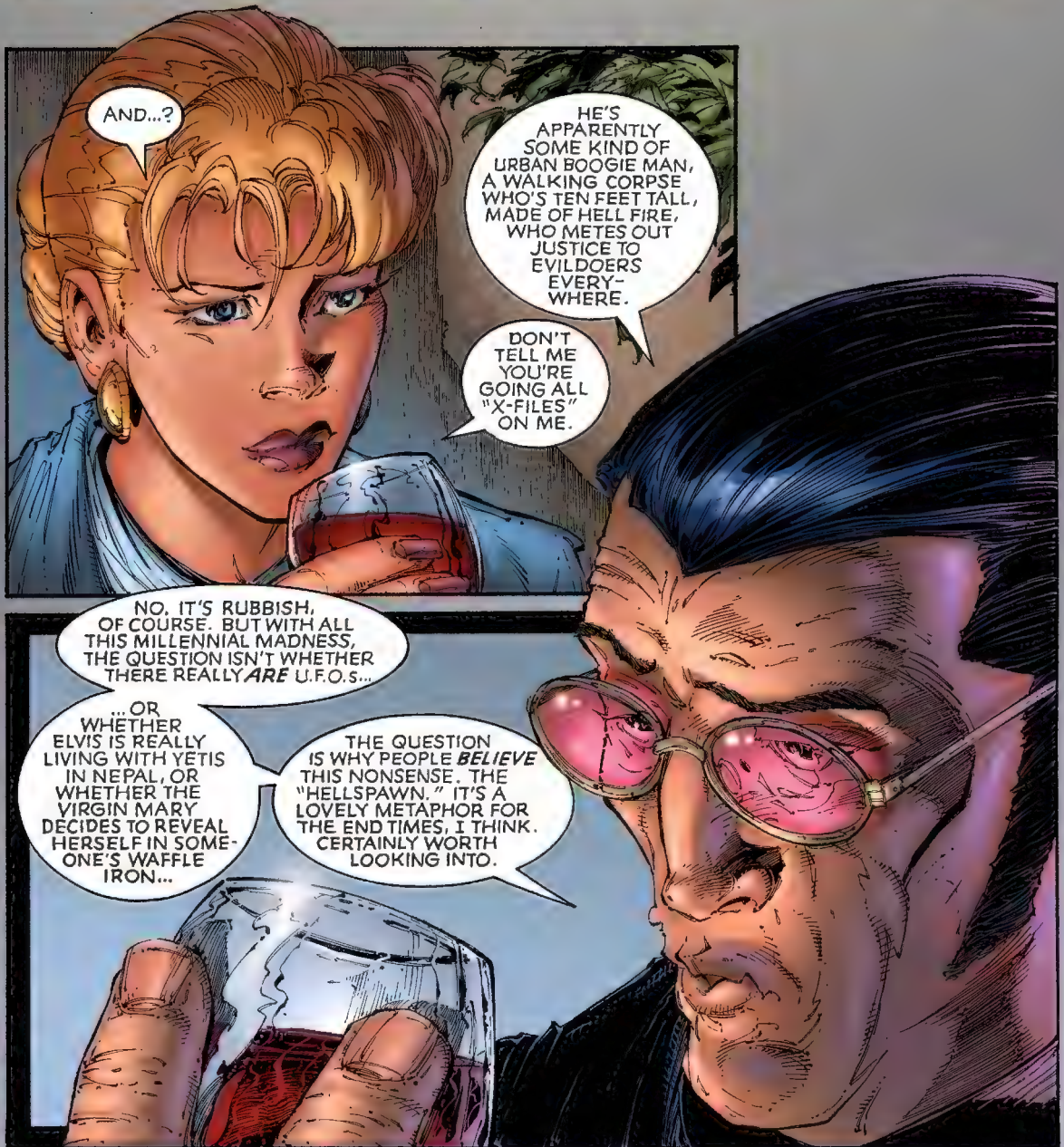
NOW, ALLOW ME TO BE YOUR AGENT FOR A MOMENT, DARLING. HOW'S THE BOOK GOING? THIS IS A CRUCIAL TIME, FOR YOU. I SEE BIG THINGS.

Hmm. THE BOOK IS TURNING SOME UNEXPECTED CORNERS. I'VE UNCOVERED SOME RATHER INTERESTING NEW URBAN PHENOMENA.

LET ME ASK YOU, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SPAWN?

WHAT, YOU MEAN LIKE SALMON?

NO. AS IN HELL SPAWN. OR HELL'S PAWN, I SUPPOSE. I CAME ACROSS IT WHILE RESEARCHING THE HOMELESS MURDERS.



AND...?

HE'S APPARENTLY SOME KIND OF URBAN BOOGIE MAN, A WALKING CORPSE WHO'S TEN FEET TALL, MADE OF HELL FIRE, WHO METES OUT JUSTICE TO EVILDOERS EVERYWHERE.

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE GOING ALL "X-FILES" ON ME.

NO. IT'S RUBBISH, OF COURSE. BUT WITH ALL THIS MILLENNIAL MADNESS, THE QUESTION ISN'T WHETHER THERE REALLY ARE U.F.O.s...

...OR WHETHER ELVIS IS REALLY LIVING WITH YETIS IN NEPAL, OR WHETHER THE VIRGIN MARY DECIDES TO REVEAL HERSELF IN SOMEONE'S WAFFLE IRON...

THE QUESTION IS WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE THIS NONSENSE. THE "HELLSPAWN." IT'S A LOVELY METAPHOR FOR THE END TIMES, I THINK. CERTAINLY WORTH LOOKING INTO.

ELSEWHERE.

IT'S IN
MY HEAD
AGAIN, COG.
IT'S PLAYING
WITH ME.

I
THOUGHT
THIS WAS
OVER,
BUT IT'S
BACK.

I
KNOW.

YOU
KNOW?

YES, I'M
AFRAID I
FOUND SOME-
THING RATHER
DISTURBING.
REMEMBER THE
BRAND THAT WAS
FOUND ON MS. FROST
AFTER HER DEATH,
AND ON THE
MAN IN THE
MORGUE?*

I WAS FINALLY
ABLE TO FULLY IDENTIFY
IT. THE *SERPENTINE
ADDENDUM* IS WRITTEN
IN AN ANCIENT CODE, SO
IT TOOK A WHILE. COME,
I'LL SHOW YOU.



"DIABOLIS INTERIUM." TRANSLATES ROUGHLY TO THE "DEMON WITHIN" OR THE "DEVIL INSIDE."

IT DESCRIBES AN *EVIL SPIRIT* SENT FROM HELL, WHICH TEMPORARILY POSSESSES A HUMAN SOUL. IT THEN GOADS THE HOST TO ACT ON HIS OR HER DARKEST IMPULSE.

SO WHILE SARAH FROST *DID* KILL ALL THOSE PEOPLE, IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE SHE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THIS EVIL PRESENCE.

NOW, THIS IS THE PARTICULARLY INFERNAL PART.

THE SOUL OF THE KILLER IS THEN CONDEMNED FOR THE CRIMES IT WAS TRICKED INTO COMMITTING, AND DAMNED TO ETERNAL HELL.

WITH EACH NEW SOUL HARVESTED, THE SPIRIT BECOMES MORE POWERFUL AND MORE DEADLY.

HOW DO WE STOP IT?

I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA.

TEN HOURS AGO, MARK LUCAS HAD A FUTURE. A BRIGHT AND SHINING PATH OF POSSIBILITIES STRETCHED OUT ENDLESSLY IN FRONT OF HIM.

HE WAS GOING TO BE SOMEONE. A DOCTOR, MAYBE. OR AN ARCHEOLOGIST. HE WAS GOING TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE AND FALL IN LOVE AND GET MARRIED.

HE WOULD HAVE CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN. VACATIONS AT THE LAKE AND CHRISTMAS EVES 'ROUND THE FIRE.

BUT THAT'S ALL GONE NOW. STOLEN AWAY LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT.

BLASTED INTO OBLIVION BY SIX PULLS OF A COLD METAL TRIGGER.

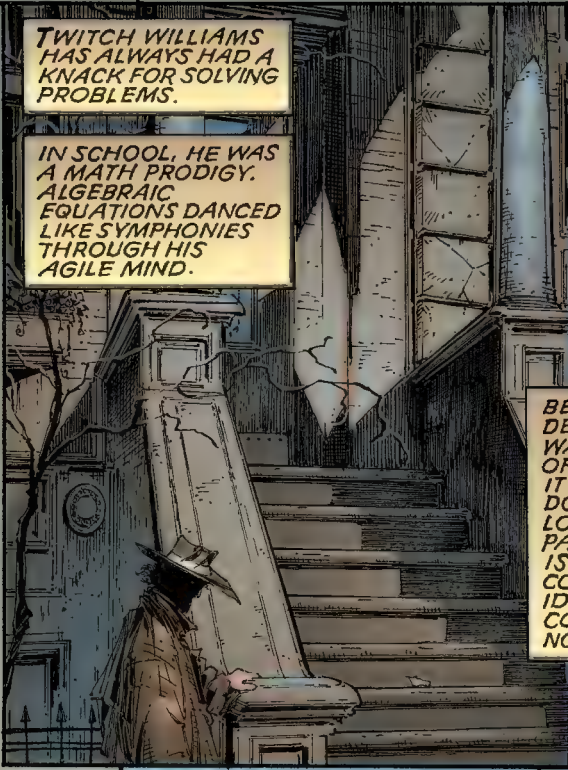
HE SEES THAT NOW.

THE GUN FEELS HEAVY AND FOREIGN IN HIS HANDS, SOME MONSTROUS, ALIEN APPENDAGE. SO THIS IS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HOLD DEATH IN YOUR HANDS.

TEN HOURS AGO, MARK WAS JUST A KID. A MERE CHILD. FULL OF CHILDISH HOPES AND DREAMS.

BUT CHILDHOOD'S OVER.

NOW... NOW AND FOREVER... HE IS A KILLER.



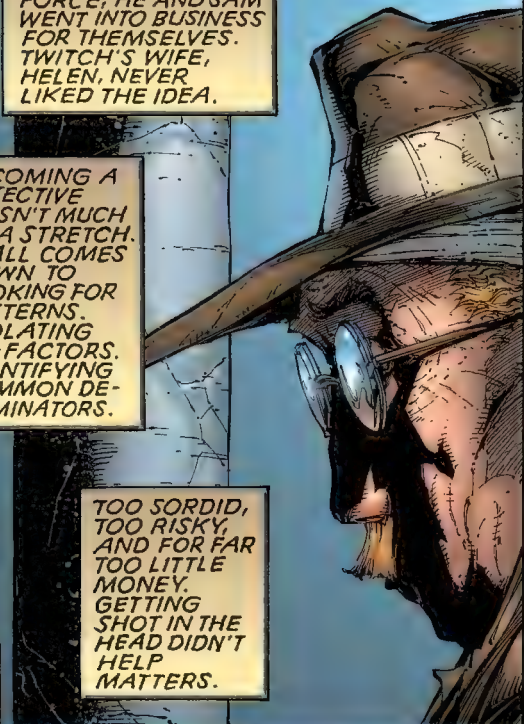
TWITCH WILLIAMS
HAS ALWAYS HAD A
KNACK FOR SOLVING
PROBLEMS.

IN SCHOOL, HE WAS
A MATH PRODIGY.
ALGEBRAIC
EQUATIONS DANCED
LIKE SYMPHONIES
THROUGH HIS
AGILE MIND.

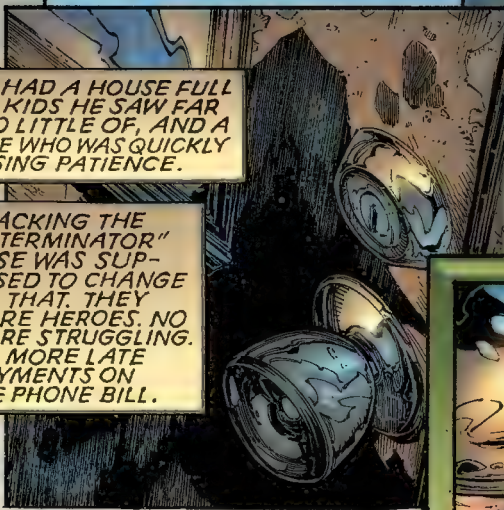
BUT THERE ARE FAR MORE
UNSEEN VARIABLES IN REAL
LIFE. "X" THE UNKNOWN.

WHEN HE GOT FIRED
FROM THE POLICE
FORCE, HE AND SAM
WENT INTO BUSINESS
FOR THEMSELVES.
TWITCH'S WIFE,
HELEN, NEVER
LIKED THE IDEA.

BECOMING A
DETECTIVE
WASN'T MUCH
OF A STRETCH.
IT ALL COMES
DOWN TO
LOOKING FOR
PATTERNS.
ISOLATING
CO-FACTORS.
IDENTIFYING
COMMON DE-
NOMINATORS.

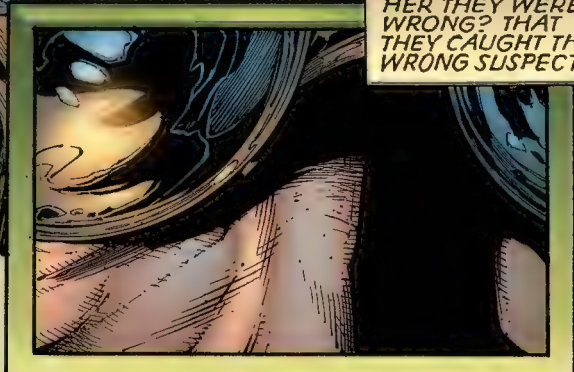


TOO SORDID,
TOO RISKY,
AND FOR FAR
TOO LITTLE
MONEY.
GETTING
SHOT IN THE
HEAD DIDN'T
HELP
MATTERS.




HE HAD A HOUSE FULL
OF KIDS HE SAW FAR
TOO LITTLE OF, AND A
WIFE WHO WAS QUICKLY
LOSING PATIENCE.

CRACKING THE
"EXTERMINATOR"
CASE WAS SUP-
POSED TO CHANGE
ALL THAT. THEY
WERE HEROES. NO
MORE STRUGGLING.
NO MORE LATE
PAYMENTS ON
THE PHONE BILL.

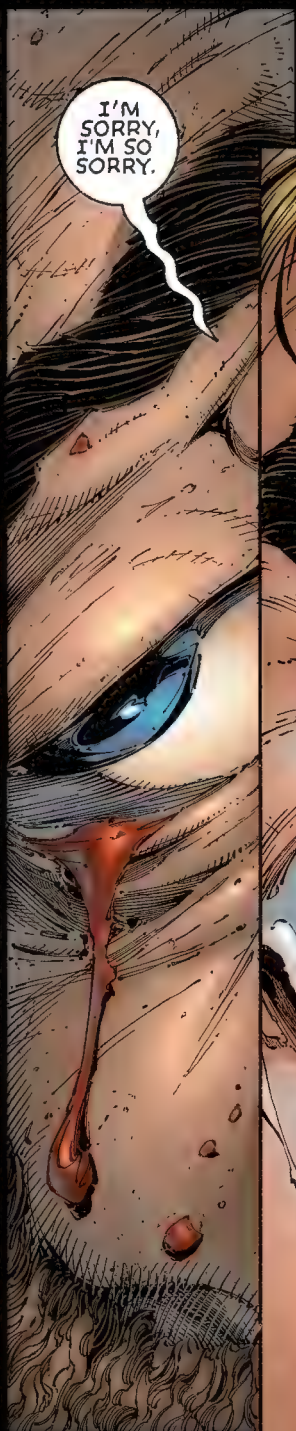


HELEN WAS SO
PROUD OF HIM. SO
HOW CAN HE TELL
HER THEY WERE
WRONG? THAT
THEY CAUGHT THE
WRONG SUSPECT?

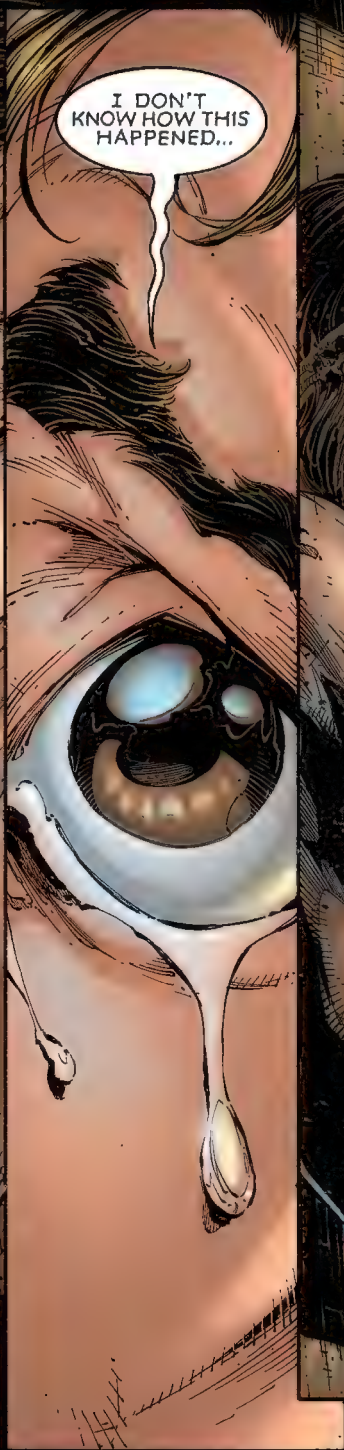


THE MAN WHO HAS THE COURAGE
TO WALK INTO A THOUSAND BLIND
ALLEYS, TO STAND BRAVE IN THE
FACE OF GUNFIRE, CAN'T BRING
HIMSELF TO OPEN THE DOOR
AND WALK INSIDE.

HE SIMPLY CAN'T
LOOK HER IN THE
EYE AND TELL
HER HE'S FAILED.



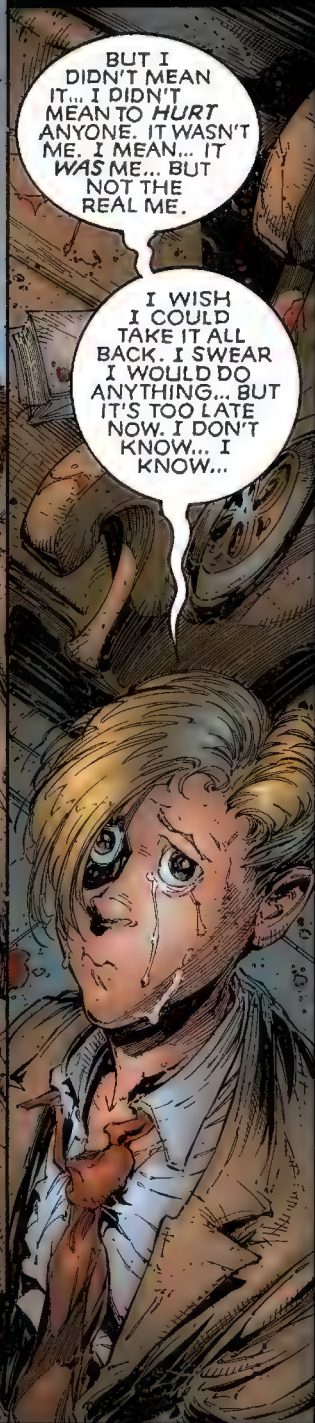
I'M
SORRY,
I'M SO
SORRY.



I DON'T
KNOW HOW THIS
HAPPENED...

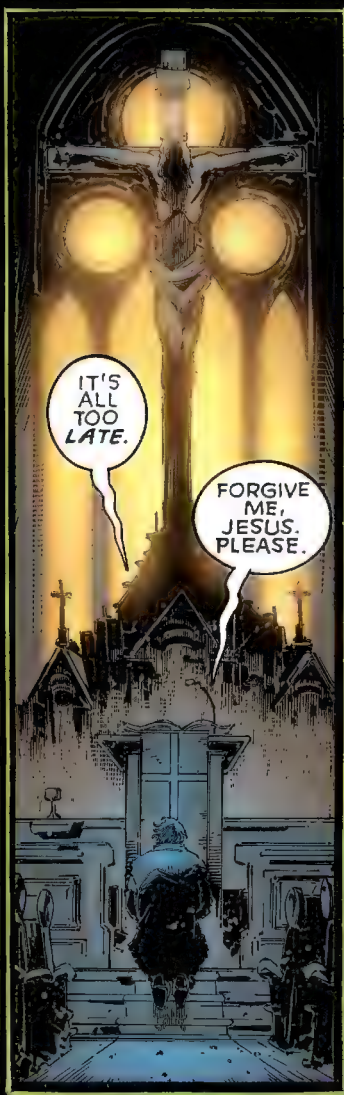


I JUST
DON'T KNOW
WHAT WENT
WRONG...



BUT I
DIDN'T MEAN
IT... I DIDN'T
MEAN TO **HURT**
ANYONE. IT WASN'T
ME. I MEAN... IT
WAS ME... BUT
NOT THE
REAL ME.

I WISH
I COULD
TAKE IT ALL
BACK. I SWEAR
I WOULD DO
ANYTHING... BUT
IT'S TOO LATE
NOW. I DON'T
KNOW... I
KNOW...



IT'S
ALL
TOO
LATE.

FORGIVE
ME,
JESUS.
PLEASE.

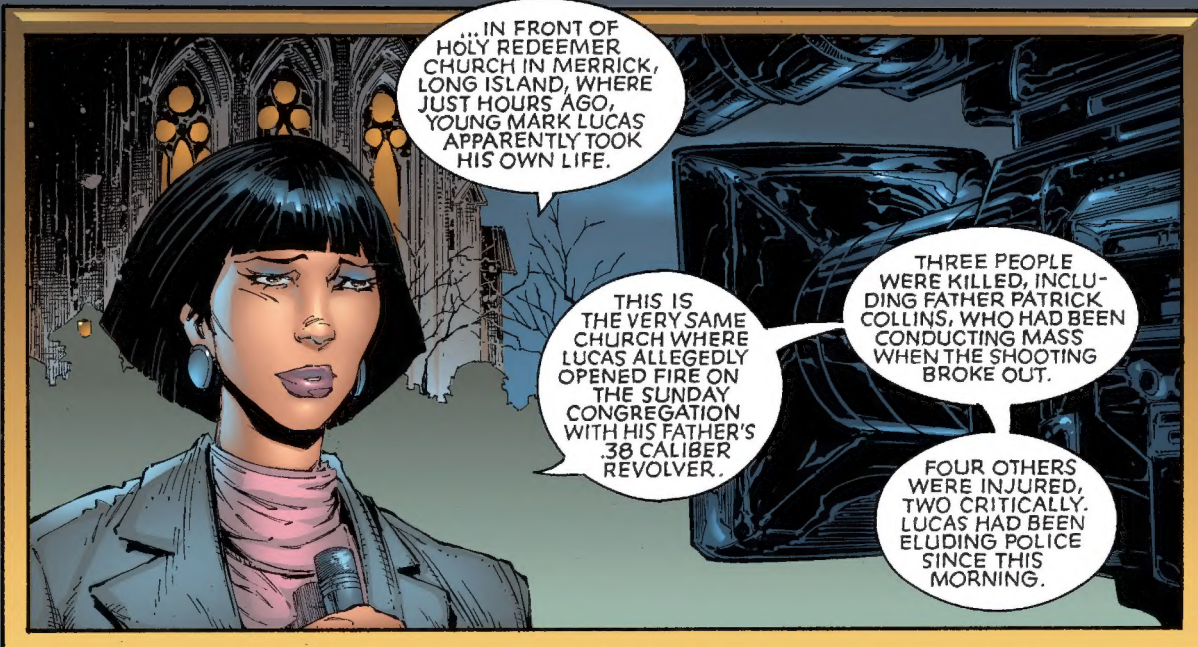


TAKE CARE OF
MY FOLKS. HELP
THEM THROUGH THIS,
OKAY? TELL THEM I
ALWAYS LOVED THEM.
TELL THEM...

... I'M
SORRY...



BLESS ME,
FATHER,
FOR I HAVE
SINNED...



...IN FRONT OF
HOLY REDEEMER
CHURCH IN MERRICK,
LONG ISLAND, WHERE
JUST HOURS AGO,
YOUNG MARK LUCAS
APPARENTLY TOOK
HIS OWN LIFE.

THIS IS
THE VERY SAME
CHURCH WHERE
LUCAS ALLEGEDLY
OPENED FIRE ON
THE SUNDAY
CONGREGATION
WITH HIS FATHER'S
38 CALIBER
REVOLVER.

THREE PEOPLE
WERE KILLED, INCLU-
DING FATHER PATRICK
COLLINS, WHO HAD BEEN
CONDUCTING MASS
WHEN THE SHOOTING
BROKE OUT.

FOUR OTHERS
WERE INJURED,
TWO CRITICALLY.
LUCAS HAD BEEN
ELUDING POLICE
SINCE THIS
MORNING.

"THE COMMUNITY HAS GATHERED IN AN
IMPROMPTU CANDLELIGHT VIGIL, A
MEMORIAL BOTH FOR LUCAS AND FOR
THE VICTIMS OF THE SHOOTING.

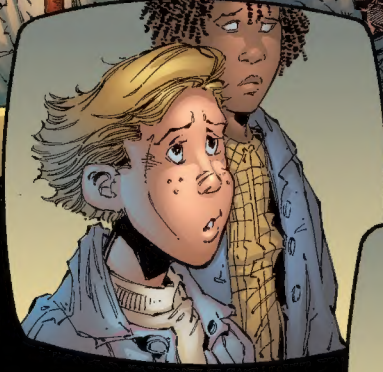
"FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
TRYING TO EASE ONE ANOTHER'S
GRIEF AND, PERHAPS, FIND A
WAY TO MAKE SENSE OF THESE
TRAGIC, HORRIFIC EVENTS.



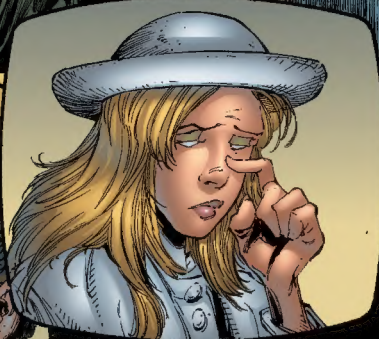
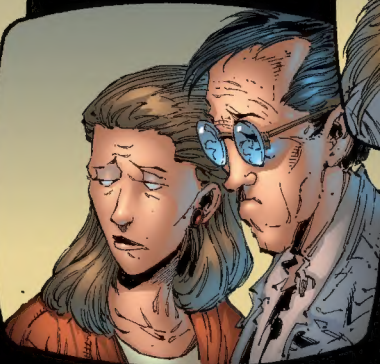
DO NOT

CRIME LAB SCENE

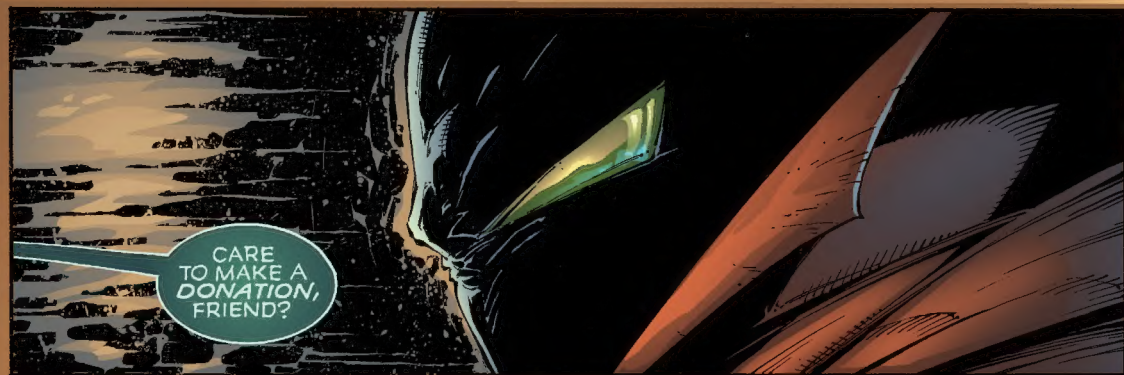
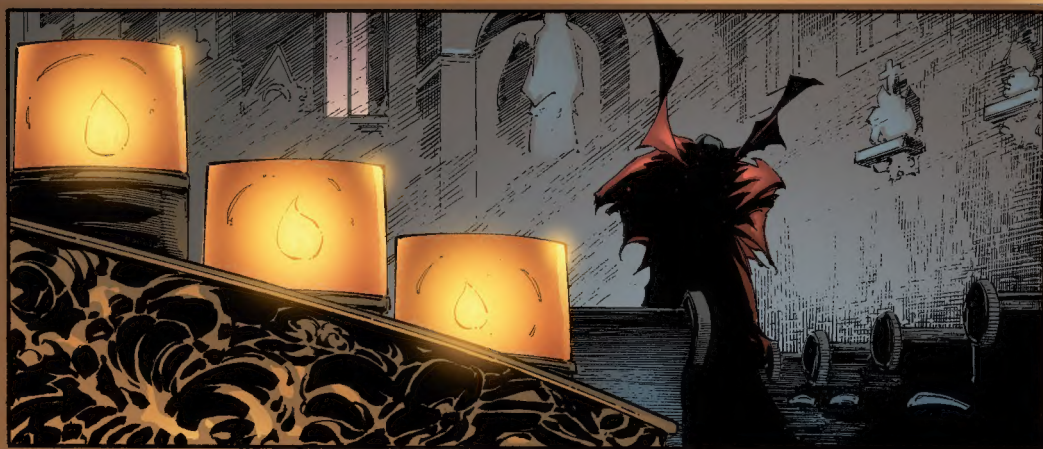
CR



"LUCAS WAS DESCRIBED
BY ALL AS A BRIGHT,
GOOD-HEARTED KID--AN
HONOR STUDENT AND
CHURCH VOLUNTEER.



"POLICE HAVE NOT YET
DETERMINED ANY MOTIVE
BEHIND TODAY'S BLOOD-
SHED, AND NOW IT
APPEARS WE MAY NEVER
KNOW..."



I'M STARTING UP A
COLLECTION...



TO BE
CONTINUED!



Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE